

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Nonfarm jobs continue to increase in February; unemployment declines

The Louisiana Department of Labor, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), continues to closely monitor the economic impact of the recent hurricanes on the business and household surveys in the affected parishes. In producing the post-hurricane estimates, BLS announced that a number of modifications were made to standard estimating procedures to better reflect the employment part of the civilian labor force estimates. For a detailed explanation of the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on all of the BLS program's methodology, please go to <http://stats.bls.gov/katrina/cpscesquestions.htm>.

BATON ROUGE – The state's unemployment rate for February 2006 dropped to 4.3 percent, down from the January 2006 unemployment rate of 4.8 percent. There were 12,800 more nonfarm workers added to the February 2006 payrolls.

The decline in the unemployment rate was attributed to several factors:

- The decrease of 22,966 claims for regular unemployment insurance (UI) compensation over the month for a level of 34,823 in February 2006.
- Louisiana has returned to the pre-hurricane method of calculating the estimated number of unemployed beginning with the release of the January 2006 estimates. This gives more weight to the household survey rather than the number of UI claims.
- The current methodology used to produce the unemployment estimates does not use Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) claims or out-of-state UI claims to determine the number of unemployed. That means the DUA claims that have risen as claimants have exhausted their regular UI claim and filed for DUA are not included in the calculations.

According to estimates, the state's civilian labor force in February 2006 was 1,892,099, down from 1,892,888 in January. The total number of employed in February increased to 1,809,815, from 1,801,230 in January. Louisiana's number of unemployed for February was 82,284, down from 91,658 for the previous month. Nationally the unemployment rate was 4.8 percent in February 2006, up from 4.7 percent for the January rate, but below 5.4 percent for February last year.

Unadjusted unemployment rates compare parishes and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) to the state. The February 2006 unadjusted unemployment rate for Louisiana was 4.2 percent, down from the January 2006 rate of 5.5 percent. The unemployment rates for the MSAs were: Alexandria, 3.2 percent, down from 4.2 percent in January; Baton Rouge, 3.8 down from 5.0; Houma, 3.1, down from 4.2; Lafayette, 2.8, down from 3.8; Lake Charles, 3.2, down from 4.5; Monroe, 3.5, down from 4.4; New Orleans, 5.9, down from 7.8; and Shreveport-Bossier City, 3.4, down from 4.3 percent last month. Three parishes tied for the lowest unemployment rate at 2.8 percent, they were Lafayette, Lafourche, and Jefferson Davis. East Carroll Parish had the highest unemployment rate with 9.5 percent for February.

Preliminary seasonally adjusted statewide total nonfarm employment for February 2006 was 1,760,500 compared to 1,747,700 for the revised January 2006 figure, for an increase of 12,800 workers. The sector breakdown was as follows: natural resources and mining, 46,500 employed in February, up from 46,000 employed in January; construction, 104,200, up from 102,600; manufacturing, 144,500, up from 143,100; trade, transportation, and utilities, 362,800, up from 359,500; information, 28,600, down from 28,900; financial activities, 94,200, up from 93,900; professional and business services, 164,100, up from 162,900; educational and health services, 212,700, up from 207,500; leisure and hospitality, 171,900, up from 169,800; other services, 58,600, up from 58,200; and government, 372,400, down from 375,300 for the revised January figure.

For more detailed information on the February 2006 employment data for Louisiana, visit our Web site at <http://www.LAWORKS.net>, scroll over the tab at the top of the page for Labor Market Information, click on Publications & Reports. and select LMI Bulletin.

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Area	February 2006			January 2006			February 2005		
	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
UNITED STATES	141,994,000	7,692,000	5.1	141,481,000	7,608,000	5.1	139,100,000	8,549,000	5.8
LOUISIANA	1,781,372	77,592	4.2	1,759,230	102,723	5.5	1,949,711	116,986	5.7
ALEXANDRIA MSA	65,116	2,160	3.2	65,248	2,872	4.2	62,340	3,665	5.6
Grant	8,100	257	3.1	8,116	331	3.9	7,754	510	6.2
Rapides	57,016	1,903	3.2	57,132	2,541	4.3	54,586	3,155	5.5
BATON ROUGE MSA	342,774	13,601	3.8	338,514	17,736	5.0	331,526	19,369	5.5
Ascension	42,218	1,524	3.5	41,693	1,874	4.3	40,832	2,121	4.9
East Baton Rouge	203,369	8,204	3.9	200,842	10,978	5.2	196,696	10,942	5.3
East Feliciana	7,871	316	3.9	7,773	394	4.8	7,613	582	7.1
Iberville	11,783	653	5.3	11,637	803	6.5	11,397	1,026	8.3
Livingston	49,681	1,547	3.0	49,063	1,884	3.7	48,050	2,585	5.1
Pointe Coupee	9,316	437	4.5	9,200	571	5.8	9,010	748	7.7
St. Helena	3,862	313	7.5	3,814	414	9.8	3,736	363	8.9
West Baton Rouge	10,062	384	3.7	9,937	499	4.8	9,732	661	6.4
West Feliciana	4,612	224	4.6	4,555	319	6.5	4,461	340	7.1
HOUMA-BAYOU CANE-THIBODAUX MSA	88,323	2,832	3.1	87,847	3,848	4.2	88,456	4,501	4.8
Lafourche	41,909	1,210	2.8	41,683	1,709	3.9	41,972	1,969	4.5
Terrebonne	46,414	1,622	3.4	46,164	2,139	4.4	46,484	2,532	5.2
LAFAYETTE MSA	120,322	3,510	2.8	120,440	4,743	3.8	118,571	5,381	4.3
Lafayette	98,783	2,809	2.8	98,880	3,838	3.7	97,345	4,170	4.1
St. Martin	21,539	701	3.2	21,560	905	4.0	21,226	1,211	5.4
LAKE CHARLES MSA	88,825	2,948	3.2	87,632	4,122	4.5	87,803	4,935	5.3
Calcasieu	84,541	2,803	3.2	83,406	3,930	4.5	83,569	4,698	5.3
Cameron	4,284	145	3.3	4,226	192	4.3	4,234	237	5.3
MONROE MSA	77,353	2,768	3.5	77,100	3,580	4.4	77,297	4,741	5.8
Ouachita	67,613	2,395	3.4	67,392	3,131	4.4	67,564	4,032	5.6
Union	9,740	373	3.7	9,708	449	4.4	9,733	709	6.8
NEW ORLEANS-METairie-Kenner MSA	404,299	25,170	5.9	393,558	33,275	7.8	589,079	33,207	5.3
Jefferson	Household sample data were not available.						217,327	11,318	5.0
New Orleans City/Orleans							187,822	12,738	6.4
Plaquemines							11,075	608	5.2
St. Bernard							29,346	1,762	5.7
St. Charles							23,119	1,202	4.9
St. John Baptist							19,429	1,240	6.0
St. Tammany							100,961	4,340	4.1
SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER CITY MSA	171,087	5,948	3.4	171,766	7,695	4.3	167,109	10,023	5.7
Bossier	48,609	1,456	2.9	48,802	1,921	3.8	47,478	2,516	5.0
Caddo	111,782	4,094	3.5	112,226	5,258	4.5	109,183	6,762	5.8
De Soto	10,696	398	3.6	10,739	516	4.6	10,448	745	6.7

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Area	February 2006			January 2006			February 2005		
	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
NON-MSA PARISHES									
Acadia (Crowley) ¹	22,807	743	3.2	22,874	1,023	4.3	22,975	1,344	5.5
Allen	7,859	353	4.3	7,873	495	5.9	7,840	702	8.2
Assumption (Pierre Part) ¹	9,064	475	5.0	8,888	634	6.7	9,077	811	8.2
Avoyelles	14,568	650	4.3	14,293	891	5.9	14,355	1,107	7.2
Beauregard (DeRidder) ¹	13,076	460	3.4	13,227	684	4.9	13,184	811	5.8
Bienville	5,748	235	3.9	5,721	322	5.3	5,703	458	7.4
Caldwell	3,880	152	3.8	3,904	196	4.8	3,847	349	8.3
Catahoula	3,743	218	5.5	3,727	269	6.7	3,651	335	8.4
Claiborne	6,381	235	3.6	6,106	308	4.8	6,407	428	6.3
Concordia (Natchez, MS-LA) ¹	6,515	486	6.9	6,468	636	9.0	6,463	726	10.1
East Carroll	2,448	257	9.5	2,358	309	11.6	2,416	419	14.8
Evangeline	11,002	430	3.8	10,826	585	5.1	10,975	763	6.5
Franklin	6,872	469	6.4	6,672	590	8.1	6,869	722	9.5
Iberia (New Iberia) ¹	28,848	1,093	3.7	28,395	1,467	4.9	29,464	1,928	6.1
Jackson (Ruston) ¹	5,971	222	3.6	5,787	269	4.4	6,017	405	6.3
Jefferson Davis (Jennings) ¹	13,304	380	2.8	13,316	525	3.8	13,204	666	4.8
La Salle	5,376	161	2.9	5,406	215	3.8	5,399	305	5.3
Lincoln (Ruston) ¹	17,122	670	3.8	16,595	887	5.1	17,253	1,083	5.9
Madison (Tallulah) ¹	4,172	251	5.7	4,030	321	7.4	4,132	448	9.8
Morehouse ¹	10,383	618	5.6	10,112	790	7.2	10,485	1,180	10.1
Natchitoches (Natchitoches) ¹	16,415	644	3.8	15,589	863	5.2	16,297	1,007	5.8
Red River	2,985	160	5.1	2,912	214	6.8	2,994	305	9.2
Richland	7,731	395	4.9	7,591	494	6.1	7,732	718	8.5
Sabine	8,702	289	3.2	8,646	386	4.3	8,641	566	6.1
St. James	7,635	483	5.9	7,508	641	7.9	8,203	739	8.3
St. Landry (Opelousas, Eunice) ¹	33,721	1,335	3.8	34,080	1,846	5.1	33,621	2,142	6.0
St. Mary (Morgan City) ¹	19,725	1,016	4.9	19,529	1,357	6.5	19,975	1,916	8.8
Tangipahoa (Hammond) ¹	43,198	2,202	4.9	41,997	2,930	6.5	45,467	2,791	5.8
Tensas	1,910	199	9.4	1,824	260	12.5	1,853	232	11.1
Vermilion (Abbeville) ¹	21,217	751	3.4	20,974	999	4.5	21,352	1,322	5.8
Vernon (Fort Port South) ¹	19,650	660	3.2	19,224	1,130	5.6	19,487	1,091	5.3
Washington (Bogalusa) ¹	13,594	756	5.3	13,344	1,042	7.2	14,802	1,123	7.1
Webster (Minden) ¹	18,029	663	3.5	17,958	572	3.1	17,873	1,208	6.3
West Carroll	3,873	320	7.6	3,733	410	9.9	3,872	635	14.1
Winn	5,749	225	3.8	5,640	293	4.9	5,645	375	6.2

¹In addition to the eight (8) Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in Louisiana, there are seventeen (17) Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MCs): Jackson and Lincoln Parishes combine to constitute the Ruston MC area. Civilian Labor Force can be derived by adding employed and unemployed. For related information or data, please visit:

www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm.